



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PHILIPPINES

GOVERNING JUSTLY & DEMOCRATICALLY

2008



*A voter marks her ballot during the national and local elections of May 2007. USAID assistance to the Commission on Elections and civil society organizations is promoting increased transparency in the electoral process.
(Photo: USAID/Philippines)*

PHILIPPINES SNAPSHOT

Date of independence: 1946

Population: 88.6 million
(2007 census)

Annual income per person: \$1,170

Source: World Bank Development Indicators 2006

USAID IN THE PHILIPPINES

<http://philippines.usaid.gov>

OVERVIEW

The Philippines continued its backsliding democratization trend in 2007 as it was disqualified from Freedom House's list of electoral democracies. The Freedom House rank for the Philippines remains "Partly Free" after it was downgraded in 2006. This decline is significant given the country's size and the fact that the Philippines was previously regarded as a model for other struggling Asian democracies. Strengthening Philippine democracy requires increased political competition and accountability and improvements in the deteriorating human rights situation.

USAID supports a broad range of democracy and governance programs at the national level and local levels. USAID funds programs in the following key areas: electoral reform, judicial reform and the rule of law, anti-corruption, local governance, conflict management and human rights.

PROGRAMS

ELECTORAL REFORM

In the area of electoral reform, USAID support for capacity building within the Commission on Elections, as well as promoting increased media oversight and a more vigorous civil society, led to an improvement in the conduct and credibility of the 2007 mid-term national elections, particularly when compared to the 2004 national elections.

JUDICIAL REFORM AND THE RULE OF LAW

USAID support for the reform program of the Philippine judiciary is increasing the capacity of judges and court personnel to efficiently resolve cases, systematize court operations through case and court management systems, reinforce the importance of ethics, and institutionalize alternative dispute resolution as an acceptable mode of resolving conflict. USAID is strengthening a court-referred mediation process that has successfully reversed the trend of an increasing case backlog and reduced the number of pending cases by 100,000 in the last five years.

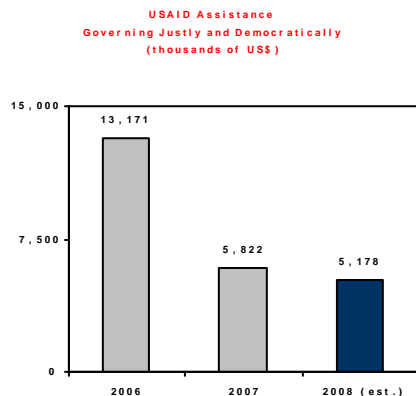


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ANTI-CORRUPTION

USAID assists Philippine partners to help the judicial system become more transparent and predictable in enforcing laws and policies. USAID implements anti-corruption programs that complement work done by the Millennium Challenge Account – Philippine Threshold Program. Support for the Anti-Graft Court and other anti-corruption agencies of the government, in the form of trainings and equipment, have resulted in strong corruption prevention measures and the investigation and suspension of a number of high-level officials.

LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION

USAID is working with local governments in the southern Philippines to establish processes for business and civil society to provide input on various local government issues. This assistance is increasing public participation, improving government services, and helping local governments become more transparent and accountable emergencies.

In conflict-affected areas, USAID-supported efforts to strengthen local dispute resolution mechanisms have also helped expand justice to the poor and prevent clan disputes from escalating into violent conflict..

HUMAN RIGHTS

USAID funding for the promotion and protection of human rights is creating greater understanding in the judiciary and among human rights organizations of special remedies made available by the Supreme Court, such as the writs of amparo and habeas data, which allow victims of human rights abuses and their relatives to seek justice. USAID is also strengthening the capacity of hundreds of prosecutors and judges to prosecute and adjudicate human rights cases, particularly those involving extra-legal killings and enforced disappearances.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Chief, Office of Economic
Development and Governance
Christian Hougen
USAID/Philippines
Tel: (+632)552-9800
Fax: (+632)552-9999